

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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FOR FUNSETH FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING JANUARY 23

NO. 16

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SPOKESMAN GAVE FOLLOWING REPLIES:

1. O'LEARY STORY IN STAR ON MILITARY AID FIGURE FOR ISRAEL PUBLISHED IN FY 1977 BUDGET (TEXT OF WHICH SENT YOU SEPTTEL); GENERAL FIGURE MENTIONED IN STORY IS IN PUBLISHED BUDGET AND IS CORRECT. IT IS ONLY A PART OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR ISRAEL WHICH ADMINISTRATION WILL PROPOSE TO CONGRESS IN MID-FEBRUARY ALONG WITH PROPOSALS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. WHILE CANNOT GO INTO DETAILS OF THAT NOW, CAN SAY THAT OVERALL PACKAGE FOR ISRAEL WILL BE QUITE SUBSTANTIAL AND WAS ARRIVED AT AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS AND IN LIGHT OF OUR OWN ECONOMIC SITUATION. WE RECOGNIZE ISRAEL HAS SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND BELIEVE OVERALL AID PACKAGE ADEQUATE TO ENSURE ISRAEL'S ABILITY MEET SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH ISRAEL ALL ALONG ON THIS, AND IT HAS ALWAYS

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BEEN OUR INTENTION TO ADVISE THEM OF OUR DECISIONS BEFORE

RABIN VISIT. OBVIOUSLY IT WILL ALSO BE A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WHILE HE IS HERE.

2. ADMINISTRATION "SURPRISE" AT PUBLICATION IN BUDGET OF MILITARY AID FIGURE: WHETHER ADMINISTRATION WAS SURPRISED OR NOT DOES NOT REALLY HAVE MUCH SIGNIFICANCE AND YOU SHOULD NOT MAKE BIG THING OF IT. FIGURE IS CORRECT, AS PART OF AN OVERALL TOTAL.

3. CURRENT EFFORTS AT CEASE-FIRE IN LEBANON: WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THEM AND HOPE DIALOGUE LEADING TO POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WILL MAKE PROGRESS. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF AREA TO ENCOURAGE POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION AMONG VARIOUS LEBANESE PARTIES AND DISCOURAGE FURTHER MILITARY ESCALATION. WITH CEASE-FIRE PROCLAIMED AND NEGOTIATIONS PROCEEDING, WE THINK OTHERS, INCLUDING OURSELVES, SHOULD AWAIT RESULTS. WE SHARE CONCERN OF CONGRESS (EXPRESSED IN SENATE RESOLUTION ASKING PRESIDENT TO USE GOOD OFFICES TO END FIGHTING) THAT FIGHTING SHOULD CEASE AND POLITICAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE ACHIEVED.

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